1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

should be kept warm in order to promote rapid healing; this care is especially important in winter. Nosebleed is often permitted to continue without interference, the victim leaning forward to allow the blood to drop on the ground. Excessive bleeding of this kind may lead to attempts to staunch the flow of blood with a cloth and sometimes the little finger is tied with a string to stop the circulation before it reaches the nose. Balsam pitch, when available, is applied to burns. The treatment of snowblindness consists primarily in avoiding exposure to strong light. In an emergency, broken bones are set by anyone who feels capable of the operation and mobility is later aided with a crutch made of a single pole, shoulder height, on which is nailed a semicircular wooden support for the armpit. One report was obtained about an old man who, paralyzed on one side, was provided with a small "sleigh" with wooden wheels. To this a dog was harnessed and thus the man could move around camp.[16] Frances Lake Indians sometimes treat swellings and pains in the joints with a charcoal cross drawn over the affected spot. Patent medicine liniments are used for muscle aches and their application may be accompanied by some massage of the painful area. Frozen members of the body are thawed with snow, which is gently applied but not rubbed in place. Corns, regarded as the peculiar affliction of men, are cut out at the root with a pocket knife, "Women can't get it," Old man said, referring to corns. "Maybe because they stay in camp, warm place." In recent years any serious bodily injury, including toothache, has been referred to white medical attention when possible.

Kaska society has formulated no clear and explicit theory of disease. As a result several vague but not necessarily conflicting notions of the origin and cause of illness obtain among different individuals. Thus commenting on his cold, Hans suggested that "wind" must have brought the "cold sick" from "down there," gesturing down the Liard River. The notion of communicable diseases being borne in the air or wind is closely allied to the notion of disease transmitted in interpersonal association to which we have already alluded. In referring to the fact that he and his wife had suffered from dysentery during the winter, Billy Barre said that people were "packing" the disease around with them "just like wind."

Some illnesses, especially cold, are believed to result from exposure to wet and cold. Thus Old Man felt he had caught a bad cold during his walk home from Old Kean's place in the autumn rains. Summer days of strong wind and flying dust usually provoke people to comment on the dust as being injurious to health. The dust raised by dancing on a wooden floor also stimulates complaints from people who ascribe sore throats to this irritant. Another point of view ascribes illness to internal disorders, particularly disorders of the stomach and liver. Louis Maza, in relating the story of his first son's death, said the child had been carried on the back of one of the older girls. He suspected that in the packing one of the baby's ribs had somehow been struck with the result that the liver had become damaged. Death followed in a few days.

Less frequently is the origin of a specific disease ascribed to the spirit of a dead person and rarely to sorcery. Informants were consistent in denying belief in "bad medicine."[17] While recognizing that such attitudes had formerly occurred in the society, today, ac-

[16] The wheel is not aboriginal in Kaska culture.

[17] Kaska ideas about sorcery may be divided into two types, first, those surviving from aboriginal times and, second, "witch-fear," which appeared in the post contact society and lasted until about 1925. See Honigmann, *Witch-Fear in Post-Contact Kaska Society* (1947).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

754 cording to Nitla: "New people like white man; he don't know." A residual faith in witchcraft may persist among the Nelson Indians. As Old Man somewhat unwillingly stated: "Looks like some people still believe it. I know Nick Lang still believe it." Following the dysentery epidemic of 1944 in the Nelson Indian district, Old Man heard Mary Wiley report: "The people pretty bad yet. They talk about witch." During a discussion of the sporadic cases of dysentery occurring in the summer of 1945 one young man spoke up and said: "Too much war; too much blood. That brings out sickness. Too much people killed."

753 757 Some of these theories of disease are at least partially empirically demonstrable. However, even where empirical beliefs apply, as for instance in connection with cold and tuberculosis, they do not necessarily influence therapeutic or hygienic measures. Isolation of the patient is not practiced in conjunction with these illnesses. Little attempt is made to prevent wetting or chilling, except in very cold weather, and in fall children often spend entire days in wet mocassins. Walking long distances in wet brush is avoided whenever possible, but this precaution is generally more a matter of comfort than of preventative medicine.

753 It is worth pointing out that there is a greater tendency to explain illness in empirical terms than to attribute it to supernatural causation. The typical methods of reacting to sickness, however, are to do nothing, use what patent medicines are available, or refer the patient to white medical attention. Although there is a tendency to defend against anxiety and fear by making light of sickness, there can be little question but that it is usually intensely anxiety provoking to the patient. Undoubtedly this fear of illness is related to the inadequate control which the society experiences over disease. It may also be related to the fear of incapacitation, which can be expected to assume serious proportions when an adult is extremely dependent on his own resources to make a living and where mobility is of paramount economic importance.

757 278 Most of the medical therapy performed by the Indians is with the aid of patent medicines obtained from stores. A high degree of faith is invested in such preparations and several assorted bottles are often purchased in the fall to be used for what illnesses appear during the winter. The most commonly used patent medicines include cough remedies, liniment, dysentery remedies, castor oil, stomach tonic, liver pills, fruit salts, and Listerine; the latter, however, is largely consumed in lieu of other alcoholic portables. Lozenges for coughs are often purchased and Vicks Vaporub is popular for colds and chest coughs. Aspirin is not commonly bought. Epsom salts are used to "clean the blood" by removing "bad water" from the intestines. River Joe drank a compound of fruit salts daily for this purpose.

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757 714 278 Indigenous medication is limited to the use of a few plants products, like balsam pitch, balsam bark, soapberry bush, and willow buds, as well as inhalation, exercise, and the application of heat.

Balsam pitch is firmly believed in for its medicinal properties, but is not readily accessible in the river valleys where most of the people's time is spent. In the fall of 1945, while hunting in the Simpson Mountains, Old Man secured some balsam pitch and put a little in his weak eyes. The pain was intense at first but in the morning he found his sight greatly improved. He did not repeat the treatment, as no more balsam was immediately available. Application of balsam pitch is also recommended for impetigo and other skin diseases. The bark of the balsam tree boiled in water and drunk is said to be an effective cure for coughs

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

Ever since I was about three years old my grandmother raised me. My dad quit mama and then mama quit me. She didn't like me, so it was up to grandmother to keep me. At the place where I saw that cutbank with the trading post on top, I also for the first time saw people hauling moose up the river. The storeman on the other side yelled to our people. "Moose swimming down the river." I think that's what he said but I was too young to understand. Old Charlie MacDonald and his people got in a big boat and followed the moose down the stream. I heard Charlie's father holler to the moose: "Take my bullet, that's the best bullet." In about three or four hours they brought back the meat.

My grandmother and her sister both followed one husband. My grandmother followed him around all the time. Sometimes, when she left me in camp to go out with a bunch of people, I became lonely. Once she did that and I began to cry and started out after her. Edward Cross' father, Kitsila, frightened me. He had an old muzzle loader that he filled with powder. He fired the powder at my feet. I ran home. When my grandmother came back I told her that I was going to stay with my aunt, Mildred. She told me: "Go ahead." But Mildred didn't want me. She said: "You cry too much." So I had to go back to my grandmother.

Soon my mother took me back with her again. We crossed the river to cut wood and one of our boys caught a squirrel with a sinew snare. I wanted to steal that squirrel. I wanted it for a pet to drag around and play with. We moved to some other part of the country, I don't remember where. The next thing I remember we were staying at Lower Post. My grandmother used to come here to live every summer. That time a great flu epidemic was raging. This was during the first World War. When the flu passed, a new kind of sickness hit us. People used to jump out of their homes and sit in the snow. Nobody knew when he did that. It was during this time that Madaline died. Then when spring came, in May or June, Old Cayuse's grandchild died. The boy had already killed his first moose. He used to show me how to hunt. One day he shot a duck way out on the lake. The bird drifted down and he sent me to get it. I cried because I was afraid, but he made me go. I got the duck for him and he gave me a bite of chewing tobacco for my work. That was the first time I tasted tobacco.

This was when they tortured my uncle. They called him a witch. I saw my poor uncle tied up but I didn't know why they did that. Once I tried to untie him, but the people nearly killed me for doing it. Then my grandfather, Old Lang, came to Lower Post. We camped downriver from the stores, near where the Highway runs now. The Hudson's Bay boat came in while we were at the post, and Albert Dease found out about my uncle being tied up in the woods. Albert went in there and untied him and took the boy outside. That time mama went to Telegraph Creek and Mildred went with her. Mildred came back again in August on the boat. I stayed in Lower Post with my grandmother and Mrs. Dickson. When my aunt came back we all went down the river again. I don't know where we stopped traveling, maybe at Coal River.[3] We caught up with Old Natucka and the Stone family and stayed with them to about Christmas. After that my grandfather sent word for us to come to his place. Old Stone didn't like us to go but grandma started out. Once we got lost because we followed the wrong trail, a trail that people had used to hunt and fetch meat. The next day

[3] See Figure 1.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

clear at this point whether the informant meant to describe an ideal or manifest pattern. The murderer's escape from the area brought about an at least temporary halt in proceedings. Instead of seeking retaliation the family of the slain man might, through a kindly disposed headman, press for the adoption of the murderer in place of the victim. This may have occurred when the two were both young and of about the same age. The murderer's family always put pressure upon its member to accede to such a request. He then grew up as the son in the other family, and appropriate kinship terms defined his position (X). No punishment existed for attempted suicide. Cannibalism, a practice apparently regarded as habit-forming, earned banishment and, as a further consequence, death by starvation. People were dissuaded from sorcery by the logical argument that the deed would result in insanity. Interpersonal punishment for sorcery was not mentioned by informants. Similar magical retaliation followed incest, but public opinion dealt very harshly with those members of the community who committed incestuous offenses. Overwhelmed by shame and guilt in such circumstances, an unhappy man might tear off his penis or leap into the fire. Most grievous of all was incest between brother and sister.

A brother wanted his married sister but couldn't get her. He went one day to hunt beaver with the girl's husband. This man had a premonition that he was going to be attacked and the sister dreamed of her brother assaulting her husband. The brother succeeded in wounding his brother-in-law after which he returned to the dwelling with a beaver. The girl refused to eat the meat until her husband would return. When he didn't come back soon, she started out to look for him. She found him lying wounded at the beaver house. After treating his wounds she asked him to kill her brother, which he did.

An unwed mother felt ashamed when she brought forth a child. Sometimes, especially in summer, the community further punished the offense by forcing the girl into a month's exile, during which she subsisted mainly by clubbing porcupines. People intended the punishment to teach her sense and prevent repetition of such behavior. If they knew the baby's father, pressure might be placed on him to marry the mother. Such a marriage would not long endure, it was believed, because a girl who became impregnated outside of marriage was too wild to make a good wife. The lover might also give a small gift to the girl's father, thus acknowledging his offense. An illegitimate baby was fairly well treated if it survived the mother's banishment.[8] People recalled its status, however, and in later years a man might be taunted with the appelation xiina ("slave"). Such jeers rankled and sometimes led a man to fight his detractors.

An unfaithful wife and her paramour ideally shared in the condemnation of adultery. Generally, direct punishment fell on the woman alone. In the presence of an economy that forced men to leave their wives in camp while they hunted, plenty of opportunity for adultery existed. Chronic jealousy and suspicion haunted husbands. Returning to camp some men closely inspected the spruce brush in the dwelling. Should they find it "tipped over" or upset, evidence of the woman's unfaithfulness was presumed. Punishment for adultery consisted in beating the guilty wife or divorcing her, with resultant

[8] Among the Tlingit the killing of an illegitimate baby by stuffing its mouth with moss or grass had magical repercussions. If neglected "very bad luck will follow the family, or clan." Jones, *Study of the Tlingits of Alaska* (1914), 45.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

755 787 Certain therapeutic rites required silence in order to be effective. These a shaman performed at a considerable distance from the sick camp, never within range of the sound of barking dogs. Probably under such circumstances a healer caused a sorcerer's evil to recoil on the latter. Detection of a sorcerer was easy if it happened that somebody remained conspicuously absent from a curing ceremony. Against the absent one the shaman directed the finger of guilt.

783 Confession helped to diagnose illness resulting from broken avoidances and apparently also possessed curative value in itself. The shaman asked, "You ever bother your sister?" "You ever kill an otter?" "How you kill mink?" "You ever steal?" When the patient had admitted an offense the confessor warned him not to repeat the deed upon recovery.

177 789 801 832 Following contact with Europeans a hunter came to perform a ritual to alleviate intense cold. He fired a dry root ("wolverine medicine") from a shotgun. Informants did not recognize the reference to "lucky number." The preceding material, however, suggests strongly that the number "four" possessed special significance. Apart from love songs, which may have been used with the idea of magically attracting a member of the opposite sex, love magic occupied little attention.[a]

754 As already indicated people sometimes used their magical power against other people. For example a reputed shaman who felt slighted or ridiculed might use sorcery in vengeance against his real or fancied detractors. People took care not to annoy a shaman. He should be "only pleased," said an informant. A man whose temperament favored sorcery sought to increase his power by dreaming of animals like the mink and otter but not all persons were sorcerers whose power emanated from these species. A sorcerer tried to "steal" his victim's wind, perhaps first securing a piece of the latter's clothing. Burial of such a possession in the ground brought about death. (Note the use of burial in this context.) A person suspecting sorcery might pay to have his wind returned. In this way really malevolent practitioners extorted women. Sorcerers meted out not only death but also illness, physical and mental, and also "troubled" a man by ruining his hunting ability. A good hunter knew that he had been sorcerized when, seeing a moose, he failed to strike the animal with his weapon. Black magic held a danger of mental illness for the evil magician, who in some cases was also executed with the community's consent. Sorcerers, however, could evade execution by slipping through their enemies' hands. An informant related a story about two Tlingit shamans, one of whom was evil. They both flew through the air. The good man disappeared after a time but his

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The wind had gone so far away that the patient was close to death. During the interval of unconsciousness nobody might leave the dwelling. After perhaps four hours the men simultaneously returned to awareness and renewed their singing. Part of the paraphernalia used in the rite consisted of a line strung with feathers. This the practitioner lashed around the patient's wrists and used to pull the latter from his bed. In that way he was pulled back to life, the informant explained. The pattern of going into a trance to retrieve an errant soul is close to the Eskimo pattern of shamanism. The line fastened to the patient recalls Eskimo divination customs.

[a] Love magic has been reported for the Tahltan. In one particular variety a white root was obtained from the ground and rolled into pellets. The woman's image was then drawn on a piece of skin and encircled with the pellets. If the charm was to be successful the pellets moved and at the same time the woman found herself attracted to the magician.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

partner continued to fly, indicating that power for evil exceeded in strength power for good.[45] The following tale is about an upper Liard River shaman who was still alive in early post-contact times:

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Squeaky Dick was an evil shaman. Once the people lined up in front of his camp to kill him. He knew this. They had a muzzle loader to shoot him. The gun couldn't fire; all the parts refused to work. The people then started to kill him with a knife. Dick threw himself down and disappeared—blanket and all. The people poked through the brush with a knife hoping to kill him. Later Squeaky Dick returned and boasted of his escape.[46]

People consulted a variety of omens. Crackling of the fire represented a communication from the dead and portended another death in a short time. Indians commonly threw a small offering of food into the flames when they heard this sound.[47] Smoke from a campfire drifting and hanging across a river instead of rising promised that there would soon be meat. The following formula is self explanatory: "If you expect your partner back and he doesn't come, tie a knot in a moccasin lace and put it near the fire. It it jumps a little he'll be back quick." To learn if one would soon travel a person held the broken-off wing of a spruce hen with tendons attached over heat. The tendons were first twisted. If the exposed tendon jerked, then one would soon travel in the direction indicated by the movement.[48] Belief in the revelatory power of dreams was common and a body of lore existed for interpreting common dreams. To dream of eating with a deceased person indicated that the dreamer would die the next autumn. A dream of joking about or with a deceased acquaintance showed that a hunt undertaken on the following morning would be successful. Erotic dreams portended the killing of female animals. To dream of arriving swans meant snow; a flock of approaching ducks in a dream spelled rain within a few days. A sick person sometimes dreamed of the individual who had sorcerized him.

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A few common weather omens follow:

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Rainbow: The end of rain.
Ringed moon: Rain or snow in two days time.
Ringed winter sun: North wind soon with snow.
Ringed summer sun: Rain in two days.
Red sunrise: Rain at night.
Red sunset: Bad weather in about three days.
Red northern sky at sunset: Warm wind and mild weather.
Red southern sky at sunset: North wind coming.

[45] The informant reported hearing that Tlingit (?) sorcerers of the Teslin and Nisutlin rivers took an animal bladder, filled it with air, and then inscribed it with the image of a man. By piercing this image with pins "all over" the victim could be brought to illness and death (O).

[46] For the description and interpretation of a witch-fear epidemic that gripped the post-contact Kaska, see Honigmann, *Witch-Fear in Post-Contact Kaska Society* (1947).

[47] "When the fire crackles, spirits are hungry and calling for food. Then food must be put into the fire." (Jones, *Study of the Tlingets of Alaska* [1914], 235. See also Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* [1908], 461.) Kaska Indians vouched for similar beliefs among the Tahltan.

[48] For an oracle operated with a piece of line and witnessed in contemporary Kaska society see Honigmann, *Kaska String Oracle* (1947).

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tselona

784 *Dease River Kaska.* Many of the animal avoidances common among the Upper Liard people were shared by the Dease River Indians. Danger came from the mink and otter, while the killing of a toad always produced illness. People fed moose, caribou, and beaver flesh to dogs, and informants did not admit to having been careful in disposing of moose hairs. Women ate any part of an animal that a man used for food. Dream animals, from whom power had been obtained, were avoided for food but whether completely or only in part we did not learn. Illness followed violation of such taboos. Young men and women drank lightly of water, apparently in order to maintain their strength.[39] No [834] restrictions on youths' drinking grease were admitted. A man avoided coitus with his wife for one night before going to hunt.

224 755 Shamans made hunting magic by singing magical animal songs accompanied by other men. Singing also operated in curing ceremonies. Any person with some power, even a youth, might perform healing magic. Should the disease not be relieved, increasingly more powerful (reputed?) shamans would be solicited. Successful cures enhanced a practitioner's reputation. In addition to confession, techniques of doctoring included blowing into the person to restore the latter's soul when it was believed to have been stolen through sorcery. A shaman also sucked intrusive disease from the body, revealing stones or very little animals that had caused the ailment. Sometimes a practitioner blew his breath into a vessel containing water for the sick man to drink.

●754 Sorcery involved the capture of another person's wind. This produced illness. Any man with sufficient power could succeed with malevolent magic, or else the services of a stronger shaman guaranteed successful completion of the deed. Only evilly disposed men accepted such employment, indicating that in-group sorcery met with disapproval. The man who produced illness could also cure it and sometimes offered to do so in exchange for a payment of skins. Suspected black magicians inspired fear and respect. No physical sanctions appear to have been directed against their activities.

787 Scapulimancy was practiced. The bull-roarer possessed magical power and a man swung it for magical assistance, to chip stone successfully and also to bring about milder weather.

784 825 *Tselona.* Certain animals aroused great fear and were never trapped. These included the flying squirrel, toad, mink, and otter.[40] To kill one of these creatures promised that one's children would sicken and die. The wolf and wolverine were also avoided for fur

[39] Before marriage a Tlingit boy's uncle told him: "Do not drink too much water or it will make you lazy." Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 428. See also above, p. 107.

[40] For the Bear Lake Sekani attitudes of respect have been reported regarding the wolf, toad, salamander, and otter. "The Indians around us had many superstitions regarding wolves; a rifle that killed a wolf would soon kill a human; or a person born at a certain time must never kill a wolf, because if he did, his nearest female relative was certain to become insane." Children were startled when shown toads. "It was quite taboo for them to touch or get near 'frogs.' Such an action meant death or illness and all sorts of horrible things." To touch salamanders "might mean that a man would lose all his worldly possessions." Otter skulls were preserved by the youngsters and would not be surrendered to the naturalists lest the "mother would be possessed by the spirits of the three departed otters and eventually become insane." Stanwell-Fletcher, *Naturalists in the Wilds of British Columbia* (1940), 131, 137, 221.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Frances Lake
Upper Liard
Dease River

755 [783] [754] [784]

pointed out that in illness all the wind did not leave the body—this would have caused death. To cure, a shaman blew some of his wind into the patient's body. No recollection of confession was admitted but Field's anecdote above suggests that practice. Sorcery sometimes resulted in death, or was believed to have that power. The avoidance on making snowshoes before snow lay on the ground obtained among the Frances Lake people as it did in the upper Liard Valley.

MEDICINE AND SURGERY

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It appears that, compared to the magical rites discussed above, relatively less dogmatic attitudes governed the methods of therapy to be described in this section. Some of the techniques to be discussed may even have been supported by an awareness of their empirically verifiable relationship to the desired end.

757 278

Upper Liard Kaska. Charcoal rubbed under the eyes prevented snow blindness. To cure the affliction the sore eyes were bathed in infusions of alder or tamarack bark. No help for snow blindness came from the application of spruce gum nor was bleeding ever used for this purpose. Spruce gum helped to treat blisters, while the young flowers of the fireweed boiled in water provided a drink that relieved muscular pains. An unidentified white root (negata), with an odor as penetrating as horse-radish, growing in mountainous country cleared up head congestion resulting from colds. After grinding it and mixing it with grease, a sufferer breathed the root through each nostril in turn. Sweat [515] baths afforded protection from colds. Both sexes took such baths regularly from about the age of ten. Men preceded women in the sweat lodge. Bathing in the sulphurous hot springs of the Cassiar possessed no therapeutic value.[42]

757 757 278

Dease River Kaska. People used balsam gum to staunch the flow of blood from a cut and then bound the wound with dry grass. The same substance applied to the inner corners of each eye relieved snow blindness without bandaging. Snow blindness was caused by small "white bugs" springing from the snow into the victim's eyes. Snow also harbored small black insects (ta?uctetla?) that had no injurious effects on human beings.[43] A tourniquet prevented fatal bleeding in case of a severed artery. Animal grease or brains relieved the pain of burns. Broken bones were set by shamans, the limb being stretched and tightly bound with a layer of grass wrapped around with tanned-skin line. The casing remained in place for several months or until the break healed. Snowshoe "sickness," manifested by aching in the toes and insteps, could be relieved overnight by wrapping and binding the feet with grass. To thaw frozen parts of the body people gently rubbed snow on the affected part. Also the frozen organ might be immersed in extremely cold water. Remedies for toothache were denied. Emetics are probable but their nature could not be recalled precisely. To treat colds, urine in a vessel was heated with a hot pole. The patient then crouched over the liquid, his head covered with a skin, and inhaled the fumes. Presumably human urine is indicated.

[42] For some contemporary remedies, a few of which, like the inhalation of urine fumes, probably have roots in the aboriginal period, see Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 247.

[43] "Small black worms" were thought by the Fort Nelson Slave to cause snow blindness. Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 132.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

was gone. The children too had been killed. Her husband was gone. The older brother said, "Don't think anything about it till we see our brother-in-law and see how he treats us."

The widower found a beaver den and set a net. He got two beaver. From one he removed the fat and he ate the other. Then his brothers-in-law came along. The husband began to weep. He asked them, "Have you seen what I have done?" He added, "You can kill me if you want to." The older brother said, "I'll do nothing till you eat." The husband picked up a piece of fat and cooked it while holding it in his hand. This gesture demonstrated his courage. He knew he was in danger of being killed but was warding off danger with a show of fearlessness and resistance to pain. He offered some meat to the brothers. When they had eaten the elder said, "I'll let you go because your hand is half-cooked now. I'm not going to bother you. I still have a younger sister at home."

Two observations may be offered concerning this anecdote, first, the responsibility assumed by a brother for his sister's moral conduct in relation to her husband stands out. Second, the use of deliberately induced pain to demonstrate courage should be noted. Both of these patterns are strongly and formally developed in the Plains Culture Area. Not only is the husband in the tale forgiven for killing the stingy woman but he is promised one of her sisters as a new wife.

Divorce aroused neither sharp criticism or shame, although the deserted spouse might display more or less resentment. Sometimes a man used sorcery to kill the woman who had quit him or to cause her children by the subsequent husband to die. Reasons for divorce included the desire of one marriage partner for another man or woman (perhaps a man who could provide a richer living than the current husband), cruelty, and adultery. Women did not always permanently quit husbands who treated them badly. Sometimes a wife merely ran off to spend a night in the bush. In case of divorce older children remained with the husband while infants went with the mother. When he became grown-up, a son might return to his father. Both patterns suggest the recency and superficial imposition of matrilineal descent in the culture.

Economic benefits accrued to a widow and her children under the levirate. However, unless the real or classificatory brother were single or the husband of the widow's sister he could not live intimately with the woman but merely supported her and her children in his camp.[37] Under such circumstances a widow would remarry following a two year period of mourning and upon receiving the consent of her brother-in-law. To choose a new husband closely following a man's death, aroused the jealousy of the deceased husband's ghost. As already noted, when a wife died her father frequently invited the bereaved husband to choose a sister-in-law as his spouse and might even insist that the latter be taken.[38]

Dease River Kaska. Boys married when they could provide sufficient meat and skins for a family, a girl when she was capable of performing household duties and understood the responsibilities of married life, particularly its ideal of faithfulness. Incest rules extended to include one's moiety. Each sex normally secured the parents' consent

[37] Here lies a powerful incentive for two brothers to marry a pair of sisters. Such a marriage readily accomodates the levirate. It would be desirable to know if there is a significant correlation between these two traits when a large series of cultures are compared.

[38] Levirate and sororate have both been reported for the Tlingit. Among these coastal people a nephew sometimes inherited the widow or the niece of a deceased woman might marry the widower. Jones, *Study of the Tlingets of Alaska* (1914), 129.

7: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1947
ND12 Nahane ND12

WITCH-FEAR IN POST-CONTACT KASKA SOCIETY

By JOHN J. HONIGMANN

ABORIGINALLY the Kaska, like their Northern Athapaskan neighbors, were familiar with sorcery—behavior in which a person with sufficiently strong shamanistic power would steal, or was believed to steal, the wind or soul of a personal enemy and thereby induce illness. Although people who practiced such behavior were feared by the rest of the society's members, they were not usually put to death or otherwise punished. Sorcery, however, was regarded as evil and might therefore automatically lead to punishment in the form of insanity. There is no evidence that sorcery in aboriginal times ever was as prevalent as similar behavior in certain African and Melanesian groups. Following white contact, however, a socially dyscrasic form of behavior appeared among the Kaska which, to distinguish it from the sorcery complex associated with the aboriginal society, may be designated as witch-hunting or witch-fear. The present paper will first present the available evidence from historical sources and informants regarding this form of behavior. Following this an attempt will be made to analyze that material from an historical, psychological, and structural point of view and apply the findings in a universal frame of reference.[1]

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

The Kaska still occupy the territory which they have always inhabited in the memory of the oldest informants. This is the area extending northwest of the Stikine River, British Columbia, Canada, to the divide north of Frances Lake, Yukon Territory, and from the western Cordillera east across the Rocky Mountains (Fig. 1). The main rivers traversing this region are the Liard, Frances, and Dease. The name Kaska is a conventional term adopted from one group of people to classify a number of contiguous tribes speaking closely related dialects. Within the area designated as Kaska several such tribes have been variously distinguished in the literature, but for present purposes the names by which they are locally known today will suffice. In the extreme north are the Frances Lake Indians. Occupying the basin of the Liard, from about the present Highway crossing twenty-three miles above Lower Post to within a hundred miles of that river's source, are the Upper Liard Indians. The

[1] Field work with the Kaska Indians took place from June to September 1944 and from June to December 1945. The work was sponsored by the Department of Anthropology and the Peabody Museum of Natural History of Yale University. To Professors Cornelius Osgood and Irving Rouse are due thanks for critically reading this manuscript. The present account will offer a minimum of general ethnographic detail. A description of the aboriginal culture based on reconstruction is planned for future publication and a psychologically oriented study of the contemporary culture is already partially in manuscript.

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gauged from the fact that between 1908 and 1910 the anthropologist James A. Teit was helping both the Kaska and Tahltan fight the Registered Trap-Line Act of British Columbia. The Indians strongly defended their right to trap anywhere without being limited to fixed trap lines. Their case, however, was lost. According to white informants interviewed at Lower Post, a few Indians about this time also manifested direct hostility to white men and the mysterious disappearance of one white trapper is said to have provoked investigation of some Indians.[3a]

In 1924 the Kaska became rather widely known because of the persistent reports of witch killings that emanated from their area. In that year the body of a young Indian, Moccasin, was found in a slough thirty miles below Lower Post. The condition of the corpse suggesting murder, the matter was reported to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who in May of the same year arrived at Lower Post, found the body, and made several arrests. The report of this punitive detachment written by the Superintendent of the British Columbia Provincial Police follows.

THE LIARD RIVER MURDER

Last spring the Department of Indian Affairs received word that a young northern Indian had been callously murdered by his fellow-tribesmen. To avoid unnecessary duplication of work and expense, Colonel R. S. Knight, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, commanding the British Columbia District, kindly arranged to have this and other matters investigated by a patrol he was sending in to the British Columbia—Yukon boundary.

In May, 1924, Inspector Sandys-Wunsch, with two Royal Canadian Mounted Police Constables, reached Fort Liard [Lower Post] via Wrangell, Alaska, and within a few days not only found the remains of Atol, or Moccasin, a young Indian boy who had been brutally tied up and left on the ice to die, but succeeded in arresting Dan Loot,[4] Jimmy Loot, Clem Loot, Big Alec, and a woman named Edie for their share in the offense. These nomadic Indians—Nahanees of Denè stock—firmly believe in magic and witchcraft, and it is because he was suspected of this practice that Atol was cruelly done to death. The whole conduct of this investigation reflects great credit upon the officers concerned, particularly when it is remembered that the natives are singularly uncommunicative when questioned on the subject of their tribal belief.

Inspector Sandys-Wunsch, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, brought his prisoners out and they are now awaiting trial.[5]

All five Indians were tried at Prince Rupert in August 1925. Big Alec was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and the woman, a sister of the Loots brothers, received a ten years' suspended sentence. The three Loots brothers were discharged. Evidence presented at the trial suggested that

[3a] See also Dawson, 1887, p. 3.

[4] This family name is pronounced Loots and is so spelled in the latest census rolls. See Canada, 1944.

[5] British Columbia, 1925, p. x14. See also Canada, 1926, pp. 18–19, 24.

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682 "the maiming of human beings, including children, has been commonly practiced amongst the Indians in the northern portion of this province . . . ."[6]

797 In June 1926 another patrol under Inspector Sandys-Wunsch assisted by Seargeant J. R. Paton was sent to Lower Post. With the party was Father E. Allard, O.M.I., en route to begin his missionary work among the Kaska. This party was cordially received by the Indians.

> All without exception were glad to see us return. The Loot family evidently bear us no malice. I must say that their stay in Vancouver [?] has done them no harm; they all were much cleaner both with regard to clothes and themselves, and present a marked contrast to the other Indians who have never been out of Liard.[7]

674 754 The report of this detachment also contains a reference to witch killings that were believed to have occurred in 1920:

> A case which came under Inspector Wunsch's notice was the alleged murder half a dozen years ago of two Indian children near Porter's Landing on Dease Lake. They were orphans, the age of the elder being variously stated at 10 and 14, and the younger being 5. In 1920 they went to the woods for the winter with a party of Indians, and when the party returned in the spring the children were missing, it being stated that they had died of sickness. Later the wife of one of the Indians left him and made statements that the children had been killed, the elder one in a very cruel manner, by being tied up by the feet head down in cold weather. No motive was stated but the woman making the assertion said that she had been tied up on suspicion of witchcraft. Inspector Wunsch investigated the matter this summer. Some witnesses are dead, the accounts conflicted to some extent, the remains would be difficult to find and identify, the principal actors in the affair are old people . . . so no prosecution has been undertaken.[8]

Writing a year or two later Allard says, "The Upper Liard Indians have the reputation of being addicted to witchcraft. In times of evil or of bad luck they will suspect one or more members of their tribe as the cause of the evil which has befallen them. The suspected individuals are punished and are often done away with."[9]

INFORMANTS' DATA

754 The incidence of witchcraft was explicitly denied for the aboriginal society and a distinction was recognized between a shaman (nudita) and a witch (ʔadatš). An informant pointed out that there were only a few "Indian doctors" left at the time of the outbreaks. Nevertheless, at least in theory, a witch, like an evil shaman (or sorcerer, *tsate*) also operated on a person's wind but the exact means by which the malevolent influence was transmitted could not be recalled.

674 754 The recorded history indicates that witch-hunting occurred among the Kaska at least as far back as 1920. From informants' data it is possible to ex-

[6] Canada, 1926, p. 24.
[7] Canada, 1927, p. 82.
[8] Canada, 1927, pp. 83–84.
[9] Allard, 1928, p. 26.

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tend the behavior still further in time. About 1900 when one man, Sam Bob, was a small boy, his uncle heard of small children being killed around Lower Post as suspected witches. In order to protect his nephews and nieces from the terror, Sam Bob's uncle took the children across the divide to the upper Pelly River. Sam Bob later heard that two or three years before this incident, or about 1897, a woman from McDame Creek, a Dease River Indian named Old Pretty, came to Lower Post where she introduced the notion of witchcraft which she had learned among the Tahltan. This woman married Captain Joe's brother, Jimmy, and gave birth to a son, Big Johnny, who had three fingers on one hand. The child became ill and subsequently Sam Bob's cousin, Atsi·zo ("Soft on the side of his head"), was found at the Hyland River by three white prospectors, dead from an ax blow. This incident is believed to have been the start of the witch-fear movement and from now on witch-killings increased in frequency.

In 1916 or 1917 Teit's Kaska informant, Albert Dease, arrived in Lower Post with freight from Dease Lake. Upon arrival he heard that Casey Jones, a nine-year-old Nelson Indian youth, and two women, one of them the former Mrs. Willy Tsiga, aged about twenty, were tied up in the bush behind the settlement. In the evening, while the Indians were gambling along the river, Albert took a walk near where the Alaska Highway runs today. He heard crying and, upon investigating, discovered the three alleged witches. Albert called his Tahltan boat crew (including Beal Carlick, who is still alive and independently verified these facts) and together they cut the victims' bonds. They took the nine-year-old boy to Telegraph Creek where he remained in school for ten years.[10]

About 1923 an eight-year-old Nelson Indian boy (whose name must be withheld) became suspected of witchcraft following the death of his infant brother. His experiences are given in his own words:

> Finally up to springtime my little brother got sick and they call me witch. I don't know what they mean. Mrs. Piel [i.e., Edie Loots] he tell me that. So mama believe him too; they call me that too. They tie me up. They let me hang by the foot. Oh boy, I wish they do that now! Two night I pretty near die. I heard an owl tell me, "You'll pull through." They untie me, tie me up. I don't know why they do that to me. They ask me lot of questions. Don't know what they ask me for. One time they make me go back pretty near thirty mile, back to old camp. They tell me, "You do that here, this kind of trick?" I say, "I don't know." But Old Madeleine up there; she tell me to tell them "yes." If I don't they're gonna kill me. So I believe her. So I say "Yes" to them. So we went back again to the real camp. My hand tied. My back tired traveling on the road. They guide [guard] me. I don't know what they do that for. We come home. And

[10] According to a Tahltan informant named Beal Carlick, the Indian Agent at Telegraph Creek refused to consider seriously the reports of witch torture on the Upper Liard. Beal therefore took his report to the government agent and magistrate who, after consultation with the Indian Agent, promised to inform the Mounted Police.

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●754 my little brother died. And Mrs. Piel—I was laying down, blanket over my head, my hand tied back. First thing I see my ear being cut. Gonna cut my neck—she try—but she give up. Then we start. Every camp I got my hand tied my back. Throw blanket over my head. Finally—I don't know what creek—they bury my brother there—mama pull his scissors out. While Mrs. Piel cut my ear half, mama finish it. She throw my ear in the fire. I see it burning. Just think I wish I was big. We got to the post. They watch me all the time pretty bad. Lower Post, Mrs. Piel want to kill me again. I got a chance, I'm escape. And his kid, Little Charlie, his boy Sylvester, them two kids tell me, "Let's play boat." And they say, "How to witch?" I don't know what they mean. I see Mrs. Piel come with string. Sure I hid in the woods. They got the whole crowd looking for me but they never found me. Sometimes they pass me right close. When I got a chance again I beat it to other place. [My grandfather] got mad. Say, "You kill that boy I kill the whole works too." Six days out in the woods I come back. Then they left down the river. Mama change his mind. Then she stay Lower Post. I think Frank Best, storeman, found out about me and tell Mounties.

The informant still bears the scars of his torture.

674 754 Shortly after there occurred the murder of Moccasin also in Nelson Indian territory, the Loots brothers belonging to that group. When the Mounted Police reached Little Charlie Slough they found Clem Loots camping there. The body, however, which had been previously discovered by a white man (Fred Allen, who is still alive and verified both the police's and informants' accounts of the incident) was missing. It was ten o'clock at night when the police arrived and asked Clem where the body was buried. The latter would say nothing. The next morning Allen and the police spread out and discovered the youth's grave. They began to dig and found the body wrapped in a gunny sack, the hands bound behind the back. One informant reported that a close relative of the Loots had died just previous to these incidents and the murder was apparently a consequence of this death.

When the police returned in 1926 they employed one of the ethnographer's informants as interpreter to investigate a report of a witch killing that had previously taken place at McDame Creek. This is probably the same incident mentioned in the report of 1927. Liard Tom's brother, Purdy, had married a Bear Lake (Sekani) Indian woman. They had a child, Johnny. Both parents died and, when Johnny was fourteen, Alec Chief became seriously ill. Johnny was tied up for several nights as a suspected witch. In the daytime his bonds were removed but he was fed little. When Alec began to improve the boy died. Alec had previously urged, "Save that boy, don't bother him." At the investigation our informant told the police, "All boys run trap line and stayed out twelve days in cold weather. This boy had sore leg and that made him weak and sick. When the boys come back, Johnny die." The interpreter did not deem it necessary at the time to add that the body had been deposited in a grave so shallow that a grizzly bear is supposed to have discovered and eaten the corpse.

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The pattern that emerges from these reports may be briefly summarized. A serious illness would overtake some member of one of the small semi-nomadic bands. An effort was made to explain the illness in terms of bewitchment and generally some child or youth of either sex was fixed upon as the guilty party. Often the child confessed to the crime which he did not understand. "Kid not smart," Sam Bob explained. "You talk to kid, 'You witch?' Maybe say, 'Yes.' That kid big, he wouldn't speak a word." Sometimes the confessed witch was killed or else he might starve to death. If the suspect refused to admit his guilt he was tortured until he confessed. The commonest means of torture seems to have been by tying up the suspected individual, sometimes hanging him up by the heels and starving him. The remarkable thing that comes out of the data is that the captivity and torture were often undertaken by a member of the suspect's family, again either a man or a woman. A mature person often sought to escape the charge of bewitchment by leveling suspicion on a child. During periods when witch-fear was prevalent people were afraid of being accused of the deed and of having guilt placed on their children. Mutual suspicion was rife and people watched their children carefully.

From this synthetic reconstruction it is clear that the Kaska's belief in witchcraft is best described as witch-fear, since there is no evidence of any Indian ever actually practicing witchcraft nor were the forms of such behavior apparently even ideally patterned in great detail. Thus witch-fear for the Kaska may be defined as an attempt to fix blame for malignancy upon one person for some definite injury to another. Certain other features of Kaska witch-fear may be pointed out. Very often it was not the supposed victim who sought to fix this blame but his relatives and friends. Furthermore all suspicion of witchcraft was localized within the community and often within the family. Blame did not depend upon any previous expression of enmity between victim and witch, for frequently suspicion fell on a child who could not easily have originated or been the subject of such hostility. Finally there was no elaboration of techniques for countering the attack of witchcraft. Shamanism had practically disappeared from the society and oracles were not consulted to determine witches. The sole remedy appeared to lie in securing the confession of the witch and/or bringing about his death. It therefore follows that witchcraft was not a commonplace or "normal" phenomenon in Kaska society as it is, or was, among the African Azande or California Yokuts and Western Mono.[11]

Although Dan, Jimmy, and Clem Loots are still living in Lower Post, efforts to persuade them to talk about witch-fear or witchcraft were unsuccessful. A number of other informants expressed impatience when questioned about this behavior and pointed out that they knew nothing of witches. They

[11] Evans-Pritchard, 1937; Gayton, 1930, p. 409.

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rather consistently maintained that it was white people who constantly spoke of "witches." Indians, it was asserted, knew nothing of this phenomenon. Sam Bob said, "What you call witch come from someplace—Tahltan, Tlingit maybe. That story come to Lower Post, so people believe it . . . . . Before that start, lot of people die off." Asked what people had died from he replied, "Dysentery maybe. When I was kid lot of people die off . . . and they believe witch does that." This man ascribed witch-hunting to an older generation. "I know old people no good. Look they die off. I tell one old man like that, I say, 'Think about thirty years ago, what you did on your nephew.' 'Well,' he said, 'Not my fault. Somebody else's fault.' Gee, they killed lots of people that time—maybe hundreds of kids. Where now Watson Lake Airport, lots of kids get killed in there."

Knowing the Kaska's unfamiliarity with the western system of numeration one will immediately discount this estimate of "hundreds." The actual scope of witch-fear is difficult to reconstruct, yet when the remembered cases of torture and killing are considered against the size of the population it will be appreciated that the phenomenon achieved serious proportions. Today the attitudes that went to support witch-hunting have almost entirely disappeared. In the winter of 1944–45, however, when a series of dysentery epidemics spread through the Kaska territory, a girl visiting Lower Post from the Nelson River region is reported to have said, "The people pretty bad yet . . . they talk about witch."

On the basis of the ethnographic data attention may now be directed to attempting to discover an explanation for this witch-fear. For purposes of convenience historical explanations will first be considered separately from psychological and structural theories. Actually all of these types of explanation are inseparable and interdependent and any final analysis must consider all in conjunction.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA. I. HISTORICAL

A survey of the circumstances related to the introduction of witch-fear among the Kaska may well begin by an attempt to spot the distribution and degree of development of similar behavior among tribes adjacent to the Kaska. From this procedure it may be determined if Kaska witch-fear is an indigenous phenomenon or if, following the informants' statements, it can be shown to have been derived from outside the area where its practice was earlier or more developed. We will discuss in order the Tahltan, Carrier, Pelly River, Slave, Taku, and Tlingit groups.

A reference to Tahltan belief in witches is reported by Teit who says, "Witchcraft is believed in, witches being a class distinct from shamans."[2] The same distinction is made in Emmon's report of an earlier visit to the Tahltan about 1906. He writes:

[2] Teit, 1912, p. 486.

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If after several visits from the shaman the patient does not improve, the shaman tells the family that a witch spirit possesses him, and that until it is liberated nothing can be accomplished, then after further payment he points out or reveals in song the person who has bewitched the patient. In thus indicating the witch, an enemy or an inoffensive person is usually made responsible, and he is forthwith bound and placed in an outhouse without food. If the person recovers, the accused person may be liberated, but if he dies, the one charged with sorcery may be killed.*

The distinction between witches and shamans noted by these two observers corroborates the Kaska data.*

A witch killing was reported for the Tahltan Indians by Sam Bob, a Kaska Indian, who has made a number of trips to Telegraph Creek where he is well known. One night Joe Campbell (whose son, Dick, is still living) missed his classificatory sister's son. He walked to a water-hole in the river and found blood stains on the ice. Reporting the matter to the authorities at Telegraph Creek, he accused an Indian whose wife was dying of having perpetrated the youth's murder. The accused man was convicted and hung. These events probably took place about thirty years ago.*

For the Sekani and Carrier Indians living in the area northeast and south of the Stikine River respectively, the ethnographic literature contains no reference to witchcraft that may be used to distinguish this behavior from sorcery.

From immediately north of the Kaska, evidence of witch hunting is contained in a manuscript written by a trapper, Poole Field, in 1913.

Amongst the Pelly and Little Salmons the belief in witches and casting of spells was very strong up to a few years ago when contact with white people and the fear of the police practically put a stop to any serious crimes. The Medicine men were the very leaders of this. They were supposed to have the power to detect a witch, when he or she were overpowered and tied up hands and feet and then hung up by the heels to a tree.

Then the doctor would make medicine over them and sing and dance, asking them if things looked different in any way. If the supposed witch said no she was left hanging there till he did. Then he was taken and killed.

Only in cases when the person was supposed to be a witch and had very powerful relations and they gave the doctor presents to doctor over him did anyone get off from being killed.*

Here again we find a distinction between the functions of shamans and

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* [illegible], 1911, pp. 113-114.

* But the distinction was apparently overlooked by Gallatin (cited by Dorsey) who wrote: "The vicious and unnatural practices of these people appear to be traceable to all men in the teaching of their medicine men or witches, in whom they believe implicitly. (Dorsey, 1887, p. 8.)

* When questioned, Saul Cadick, a Tahltan, denied all knowledge of witch-fear ever occurring in the Tahltan area. * Field, 1913, p. 6.

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witches. Any distribution of witchcraft north of the Pelly River is not reported, although this area presents a large gap in ethnographic knowledge.

East of the Kaska the Sikanese, a Slave group, do not appear to have been familiar with a belief in witchcraft as distinct from sorcery but they did fear the Kaska sorcerers, perhaps interpreting the rumors of witchcraft which reached them in the frame of reference of traditional sorcery.[6]

For the Tahu Indians west of the Upper Liard Indians there is also a lack of ethnographic material which might be examined for evidence of a belief in witches. Further west, however, along the Pacific coast of Alaska, the ethnographic data on witchcraft represent largely historical reconstruction but the pattern is so similar to Kaska practice as to warrant consideration. According to Swanton,

> When sought, the wizard was tied up for eight or even ten days without food or drink, unless he confessed to the deed and agreed to find the witching medicine. After he had brought this out he ended in the end up to his shoulders and scattered it. If he refused to confess he was thrown at the end of the time given but not infrequently he died before to explanation. Sometimes, however, his friends interfered and threatened conflict.[7]

In practicing witchcraft, the witch among the Tlingit is supposed to have secured an article of the proposed victim's clothing—some hair, spittle, or fish bone from which the latter had eaten. "Then he made an image of his body, which he treated in the way he wanted the living person to suffer, making it a mere skeleton, to bring on convulsions, deforming the hands, to destroy the ability of a woman at weaving, etc."[8]

According to Jones' report of the Tlingit, diseases, "especially those of a lingering and wasting nature, like consumption, are regarded as the work of malevolent witches." Two techniques for effecting a cure were recognized, expelling "the evil spirit that possessed the sick" and hunting and killing the witch.[9]

In case the sick recovered, no witch was known. On the other hand, if the patient grew worse and showed signs of dying, then the wily doctor evaded responsibility by asserting that a witch was hindering his work and must be found and killed.[10]

Jones remarks that no ineffectual person was usually selected as the witch. "The victim was first ravished, reproached, brutally and shamefully treated, and

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[6] Honigmann, 1946. There is a possibility that the distribution of witchcraft may not have extended into Kaska area. Any answer to this question must await ethnographic materials hitherto available for the eastern Sayeni—see Cornwall's reference to a sorcery finding after the accused had been beaten to death. People have recently been pointed out. Such a suggestion is the typical of relations between different dialect groups of Northern Athapaskans in which the possibility that the witnesses may have been confederates by reports of misdeeds.

[7] Swanton, 1909, pp. 449-450. [8] Swanton, 1909, p. 450.

[9] Jones, 1914, p. 374. [10] Jones, 1914, p. 384.

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subsequently put to death.[illegible] Torture included tying the alleged witch to stakes before the rising tide, or in the forest "for wolves to devour." A suspect was also allowed to starve to death. Sometimes the limbs of suspects "were tied to their bodies and then they were thrown naked on a bed of thorns."[illegible] Swanton, Jones, and Pinart all speak of Tlingit shamanism as apparently distinct from witchcraft.[illegible]

Accepting the statements of informants that belief in witchcraft reached the Easka from outside of the area, it seems extremely likely that such attitudes were transmitted from the Tlingit, where the witchcraft behavior was (at least ideally) more firmly developed and, from its more extensive relations with the shamans complex, apparently persisted from aboriginal times. From the Pacific coast the attitudes passed to the Tlingits' immediately adjacent neighbors, the Tahltan (and possibly the Taku) and then made their way across the Cordillera to the Pelly River and western Easka Indians.[illegible] In this process of transmission the techniques of witchcraft were apparently lost but the important underlying fear of the witches' activities as well as their torture, death, and selection from "ineffectual persons," namely children, were retained. From Sam Bob's statement, "What you call witch come from some place—Tahltan, Tlingit maybe" and his report of a woman coming to Lower Post with witch-fear learned from Tahltan sources it would appear that the Tahltan were middlemen in this transmission. The Tahltan had long been intermediaries in the fur trading carried on between the Tlingit and the interior Indians although in early days the privilege of trade with the Tahltan had been reserved for only a few Tlingit families.[illegible] Intercourse [illegible] these tribes resulted in intensity when the Tlingit became the boatmen who, during the gold rushes following 1873 and 1897, operated up the Dikkins River visiting Glenora and Telegraph Creek. On the other hand the absence of witch-fear phenomena to the east of the Easka, among the Fort Nelson Slave, and to the south, among the Sekani studied by Jenness[illegible] proves conclusively that the behavior could not have reached the Easka from these tribes. Further light on the mechanics of transmission will undoubtedly be gained through ethno-

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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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graphic work with the Tahltan and other Pacific-drainage Athapaskan groups.

In view of the statements that the practice of witch hunting was absent in aboriginal Kaska society it may be expected that this attitude appeared in the area between 1820 and 1900. A survey of the historical background has already revealed two great movements of white people up the Stikine waterway, one starting in 1872 and another in 1897. The reports of Dawson, who was in the country about 1887, make a passing reference to witchcraft among the Tahltan. Therefore it seems reasonable from all available evidence, including informants' data, to ascribe the introduction of witch-fear in Kaska territory to the closing years of the nineteenth century.

At this period other occurrences probably had an influence in conditioning the acceptance of such beliefs. Kaska culture was undergoing a period of drastic change. The adaption of the Indians was being severely tested by the influx of people who by their numbers were probably dispersing the game on which the Indians depended in large measure for survival. Never comfortable with strangers, the people were now being exposed to all manner of contacts, some of which were certainly not courteous and considerate.* In addition must be considered the Indians' exposure to introduced illnesses, which were taking a heavy toll of life. Even today the people blame the white man for the origin of tuberculosis and colds. The study of the influence of these historical changes on the adoption of beliefs in witchcraft is part of the psychological problem to which attention will now be directed.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA, II, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL

A study of the psychological functions of Kaska witch-fear must answer several related questions. In the first place why, if as is known, the Kaska as well as the Tahltan had a knowledge of and contact with the Tlingit going back to aboriginal times, was the belief in witchcraft not accepted long before? Here again historical factors must be examined before any psychological explanation need be attempted. The superimposition of witchcraft belief on patterns of shamanism among the Tlingit suggests that these people had themselves only developed attitudes of witchcraft relatively recently. Furthermore intense contact with Tlingit society probably did not occur for the Kaska until the close of the nineteenth century when interaction with the Tahltan probably also occurred on a friendly rather than, as had previously been the rule, on a hostile basis. The question therefore becomes limited to the predisposing conditions which influenced the acceptance of a belief in witchcraft in relatively modern times. It may now be asked, what problems did a belief in witchcraft satisfy in Kaska society at the time of its acceptance and what were the functions of this belief?

* For a picture of the type of men who went to the Kaska land see Tonsch, [illegible], p. [illegible], also Goodwill, [illegible].

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approach to problems of adaptation to which traditional solutions cannot be readily applied.

A basic anxiety conditioning relatively low resistance to traumatic situations develops primarily from the relationship of the Kaska mother to her child. In the first two years of life the infant receives extremely favorable treatment. The mother responds readily to the baby's discomforts; crying is quickly rewarded, while affection and attention are consistently displayed. Between two and three years of age the mother's behavior undergoes a change. Whether or not another baby is born, the mother becomes emotionally more remote and self-occupied and her relationship to the child becomes one that is best described as emotional rejection. Crying is scolded, and demands for affection to which the child has become accustomed are ignored. It is not unusual to see four- and five-year-old children who have been hurt crying by themselves rather than seeking emotional comfort from a parent or other adult. Thus from a period of affectional demonstrativeness the Kaska mother returns to the pattern of emotional aloofness that is characteristic of most interpersonal relationships within the society. This hiatus in development sets up a number of dynamics in the child's personality but the only one with which we are concerned is a deep-seated anxiety and feeling of insecurity toward the world, leading to an ambivalent attitude toward all intense emotional relationships.[9] This basic anxiety remains with the individual throughout life and is responsible for the inadequate strength of the Kaska ego when confronted by crisis.

At the time of the witch-fear outbreaks the Kaska found their survival imperiled. This threat came from several sources which have already been mentioned; the influx of strangers had upset the balance of game, new illnesses were introduced, and an adequate standard of living was coming to depend heavily upon the intensive trapping of skins to exchange for the white man's foodstuffs. All of these changes presented problems of existence for which traditional solutions were inadequate. Hunting required additional effort and was accompanied by more uncertainty than ever before while the belief in the efficacy of charm songs for luck, and other hunting ceremonials had disappeared; illness, for which the Kaska were never well equipped, was increasing while native therapeutics, notably the belief in shamanism, had already broken down. Trapping required degrees of foresight, initiative, effort, and long-range planning for which the Indians were (and still are) psychologically unprepared. On the other hand, the rewards of trapping, the most important of which was an adequate supply of food that would reduce the necessity of hunting, were considerable so long as this ability was not efficiently

[9] These conditions are well demonstrated in the Rorschach situation in which the Kaska subject displays an intense fear of the free interpersonal relationship that administration of the test presents to him, a pronounced reluctance to respond to internal and external emotional stimuli (color shock), few movement responses and deep-seated primary anxiety (shading shock).

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managed. For an assertive and basically confident people these problems would perhaps not have been too catastrophic. Kaska resourcefulness, however, is limited to relatively familiar situations or those which do not require a prodigious expenditure of energy and too severe a disruption of normal routines. In novel critical situations the Indian reveals a tendency to passivity and procrastination. These behaviors, totally inadequate as defenses in the acculturation situation, simply aggravated adaptive crises when they were applied to hunting, illness, and trapping. The inevitable result was the arousal of secondary frustration and anxiety.

It was this anxiety, leading to interpersonal difficulties and hostility (which the Kaska are unable to express directly) which was the condition predisposing the society to a favorable reception of witch-fear. Sickness, always a conflict situation for a people dependent on mobility to survive, was the area in which the introduced pattern became readily integrated. Witch-fear solved the emotional problems of frustration and anxiety by offering a channel for the discharge of their derived hostility.

Although this was the general predisposing condition facilitating the reception of witchcraft, certain structural congruities to witchcraft must not be overlooked.[8] Without an awareness of the possibility of effecting malevolence sympathetically or contagiously, such as existed in the former belief in sorcery, witchcraft would have had greater difficulty in taking hold. Torture also had a place in the aboriginal way of life, enemy captives taken in intertribal warfare having been even more callously treated than were suspected witches. Finally the social structure of the group must be regarded as having been functionally related to the introduced attitudes by making it possible for suspicion and fear to exist between even proximate relatives and neighbors.

Kaska society has always been marked by extreme atomism with a minimum of social identification extending beyond the family. Even within the family authority was weak but deference highly emphasized. Cooperation was rare and always on an individualistic and voluntary basis. The largest and best definable unit of social structure beyond the family was the mobile band having the nuclear family as the center around which were grouped grandparents, sons-in-law and, occasionally, other relatives. Such bands were sociologically cemented by the emotional bonds of primary kinship relations. Beyond these bonds affinal kinship, personal friendship, congeniality, and common membership in an exogamous moiety[9] operated to maintain social relations, but such

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[8] We here use "structural" in somewhat the same sense that Kluckhohn has spoken of "structural analysis" as "an investigation of 'functional dependencies' " or "the interrelation of parts" of a culture, but excluding those psychological factors which are commonly referred to "personality." This is functionalism in Radcliffe-Brown's rather than Malinowski's sense of the term. (Kluckhohn, 1944, p. 43; Radcliffe-Brown, 1948.)

[9] Dual organization did not extend to the eastern Nahane Indians and probably not to the Tagish-Tutchone.

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ties were weak and unformalized. When a band through marriage secured members of another dialect division (i.e., tribe) the affinal kinship ties were apt to be riddled by considerable distrust. Even today relations between dialect groups are apt to be strained although considerable marriage has taken place between them. Thus on its peripheries the band was extremely unstable and possessed few mechanisms for cementing relationships with other bands. Between such units only more distant blood and affinal kinship ties operated, and here the emotional factor needed to reinforce kinship ties in a society where interpersonal relations are not strictly formalized was even more minimal. Covert interpersonal hostility was congruent to and almost inevitable in such a social structure wherein the individual literally felt he could depend on nobody but himself and in which mistrust rapidly mounted beyond the nuclear family. Obviously, therefore, relatives and neighbors often failed to inspire confidence or security and numerous possibilities for suspicion of malevolence were available. In the absence of any organized chieftainship such antagonisms were primarily subject to individual control in accordance with the ideals of the society.

This analysis has not yet directly explained one important feature of Kaska witch-fear. Why was suspicion of witchcraft so often directed against children? In part the answer may lie in the fact that adults often circumvented accusations by placing the blame for alleged bewitchment on defenseless children. A psychological explanation underlying such behavior can be found in the fact that the Kaska's timidity in interpersonal relations and the correlated deference patterning manifest adult relations made it undesirable to arouse direct hostility.[8] Children, therefore, were safer targets for accusations. Finally we must look to the society's attitudes toward children. The inhibition of demonstrative affection to children has already been pointed out and would seem to point to ambivalence as regards children. An interpretation of conflicting attitudes toward offspring is strengthened by the evidence that some women do not want children and this is related to expressions of masculine striving in some female members of the contemporary society. There are more socially patterned techniques for inducing sterility and contraception than there are means of promoting fecundity. It becomes conceivable, therefore, that a woman who was emotionally withdrawn and unconsciously ambivalent in her attitude toward children could assist in the torture of her own or a relative's child. Emotional rejection, it must be pointed out, is not correlated with conscious hostility toward children and of course, not all parents demonstrated hostility to children. Many greatly feared the hysterical outbreaks of witch-fear and witch-hunting and sought to protect their families by removing them from the area.

[8] Kluckhohn has found fear of witchcraft among the Navaho to be correlated with only a slight incidence of overt interpersonal aggression. (Kluckhohn, 1944, p. 53.)

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CONCLUSION

Much has been written about the Northern Athapaskans' supposed predilection to borrow from the cultures of their neighbors. Some of the instances cited of such alleged transmissions can now be demonstrated to rest on an incorrect interpretation of what meager evidence was available when these accounts were written, although the adaptability of a people like the Kaska remains a well-defined charasteristic. With regard to witch-fear, it is believed that the aboriginal absence and relatively late introduction of the behavior in question have been adequately demonstrated historically. Witch-fear seems to have originally developed among the Pacific Coast Tlingit and from there made its way to certain inland Athapaskan tribes, including the Kaska. In the case of the Kaska, this transmission probably utilized the Tahltan as middlemen.

The Kaska did not receive witch-fear without being prepared for this behavior. Witch-fear functioned to relieve the anxiety and derived hostility generated in a basically anxious personality by conditions of acculturation, and was possible in a society that lacked strong organization beyond primary kinship ties. Witch-fear may be diagnosed as a reaction to social stress and is therefore comparable to other reactions manifested by societies following devastating effects of acculturation.

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